

**St. Nicholas School Canterbury**



Canterbury District  
STLS & Outreach

## ADVICE SHEET

# The Incredible 5-Point Scale

### What is the scale used for?

It is a visual system used to teach **social** and **emotional** concepts (e.g. anxiety; anger; appropriate voice volume etc.)

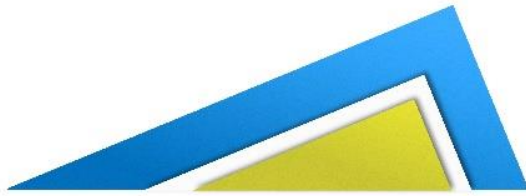
It can support children to:

- recognise their own emotions and the level of the emotion
- manage their own emotions effectively (i.e. self-regulation)
- communicate their emotions to others (e.g. giving a number instead of having to describe a feeling)



### Why use the 5 point scale?

- *Simple and effective visual approach*
- Teaches confusing and abstract concepts in a more *concrete* and *systematic* way
- *Versatile* (e.g. It can be used for a wide range of ages, applied to any behaviour or emotion)
- Scales and language used are *non-judgemental*



- **Getting started:** Introduce the scale when the pupil is feeling calm and regulated, working 1:1 with a trusted adult.

### • Step-by-step:

1. Choose the emotion, concept or skill that you are going to target e.g. anxiety.

2. Work with the pupil to break the concept into five parts.

Make 1 the smallest and 5 the biggest (avoid the terms good or bad).

3. Work with the pupil to define each part in terms of:

⇒ *How does it feel?*

⇒ *What does it look like to other people?*

⇒ *What can I/we do to help?*

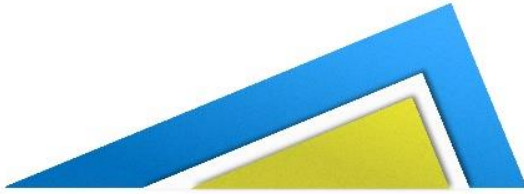
- Include the pupil's ideas about what they can do.

- Identify (when appropriate) prearranged safe places; staff; any resources that will need to be available.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <br>I am going to explode    | <p>How I look/Feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VERY ANGRY!!!</li> <li>• VERY Unhappy</li> <li>• Can't calm down</li> <li>• Ready to explode</li> </ul> | <p>What I can Try</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult needs to make a choice for me</li> <li>• Time out in Nurture to calm down-Talk about what has happened.</li> </ul> |
| <br>I am getting upset      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not Happy</li> <li>• Unable to work</li> <li>• Getting myself worked up</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time Out</li> <li>• Someone to talk to-Nurture</li> </ul>  |
| <br>I am getting irritated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritated</li> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Cannot concentrate</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time Out</li> <li>• Left alone-to think and be able to calm down</li> </ul>  |
| <br>I am doing ok          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sure/But trying</li> <li>• Happy to ask for help</li> <li>• Trying to stay on task</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask an adult for help</li> <li>• Sit and think about what I need to do</li> </ul>  |
| <br>I am doing Great       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy</li> <li>• On Task</li> <li>• Ready to work</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay like this</li> </ul>  |

### Next steps:

- Create a portable scale for pupil to carry as a reminder.
- Check in with them during the day. "What level are you at?"
- Review the scale with the child before predictably difficult times.
- Use it to problem solve past scenarios and help create plans for self-management.



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## Key points to remember:

- Develop the scale together with the pupil.  
Personalise it (e.g. use of pictures, colours—you do not have to use numbers or these particular colours) and include the pupil's own words. This will increase its relevance and the motivation to use it.
- There do not have to be 5 levels (3 might be more appropriate).
- Share with home (but be aware the scale may need to be amended for home).
- Do not rush the process or expect immediate impact – it can take time!

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | 5 |
|  | 4 |
|  | 3 |
|  | 2 |
|  | 1 |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 5 | <b>I can't stand this. I am ready to explode.</b><br>I want to hit or kick someone or something. I need an adult to help me go to a safe place so I can calm down.                     |  |
| 4 | <b>I am getting too angry.</b><br>My brain isn't working clearly. I might say or do something I will be sorry for later. I need to go to my safe place at the back table to calm down. |  |
| 3 | <b>I am getting really irritated.</b><br>I need to walk away from a bad situation. I will tell my teacher that I need a break.   |  |
| 2 | <b>I am doing OK.</b><br>I'm not pleased, but I'm not upset. I can stay where I am and keep working. I can control my anger by myself.   |  |
| 1 | <b>I am doing great.</b><br>I feel good about myself, and about what is going on around me.  |  |

## For further information:

- The Incredible 5-Point Scale: The Significantly Improved and Expanded Second Edition. Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
- STLS Online Training: The Incredible 5-Point Scale